Telephone connections practically on demand by 1997 all over the country including Nagpur & Patiala.

(c) (i) Since 19.05.87 in Nagpur
(ii) Since 08.05.94 in Patiala

(d) and (e) Waiting list clearance position is published in leading newspapers whenever new connections are released in bulk.

Manufacture of Telephone Instruments

2406. SHRI JAGIR SINGH DARD:
DR. SHRIKANT RAM-CHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of telephone instruments manufactured in our country in the last year;

(b) what is the annual requirement of telephone instruments and the cost of production of one telephone instrument;

(c) how many companies are engaged in the manufacture of telehone instruments;

(d) what is the difference in the prices of imported and indigenous telephones instruments, category-wise; and

(e) what is being done by Government to encourage their production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) There are 24 telephone instrument manufacturing companies in the organised sector.

(d) The import of telephone instruments is restricted under the current Export-Import Policy. The question of price comparison, therefore, does not arise.

(e) The Custom duties on raw material and components have been progressively reduced to encourage their production in the country. Various steps are also being taken to promote the Export of Telephone instruments so as to increase their demand and thereby their production.

अनुसूचित जाति/अनुसूचित जनजाति/अन्य पिछड़े वर्गों के आवेदकों को पी०सी०ओ० के लिए प्राथमिकता दिया जाना

2407. **श्री राघवजी:** क्या संचार मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि महानगर टेलीफोन निगम लिमिटेड, एस०टी०डी० आई०एस०टी०डी० और स्थानीय पी०सी०ओ० आवंटित करते समय अनुसूचित जातियों अनुसूचित जनजातियों और अन्य कुछ वर्गों के आवेदकों को प्राथमिकता देता है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो क्या सरकार उपर्युक्त प्राथमिकता-प्राप्त वर्गों में अन्य पिछड़े वर्गों के आवेदकों को भी सम्मिलित करने के बारे में विचार कर रही है; और

(ग) यदि हां, तो उसका ब्यौरा क्या है; और यदि नहीं, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं?

संचार मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री सुखराम): (क) जी, हां।

(ख) जी, नहीं।

(ग) चूंकि सभी शिक्षित बेरोजगारों को एस टी डी/आई एस डी/पी सी ओ मंजूर किए जाते हैं तथा स्थानीय पी० सी० ओ० उदारता पूर्वक मंजूर किए जाते हैं, बशर्ते तकनीकी रूप से व्यवहार्य हो, यह आशा की जाती है कि अन्य पिछड़े वर्गों के प्रत्याशियों सहित, आर्थिक रूप से पिछड़े वर्गों के प्रत्याशी एस टी डी/आई एस डी/पी सी ओ तथा स्थानीय पी सी ओ के आवंटन में लाभान्वित हो सकेंगे।

New Post of Engineer-in-Chicf in DOT

2408. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Department of Telecommunications has created posts in different disciplines, to be called Enginecr-in-Chicf or Engineer-General:

(b) whether only the disciplines of Architectural and Electrical Engineering have been covered, excluding the discipline of civil engineering;

(c) whether similar post for Civil Wing is to be created soon; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Yes Sir, as indicated at (b) below.

(b) The post of Enginecr-in-Chief (Elect.) was created personal to an officer in the Electrical discipline. The post of Architect-in-Chief in the Architectural discipline was created on the basis of recommendations of a Committee.

(c) and (d) The question of creation of a post at the level of Engineer-in-Chicf in the Civil Wing is under examination. The policy in this regard will be evolved in relation to restructuring of the Hqs. of the Department of Telecommunications presently under consideration.

Disparities in Charges for STD/ISD in Hotels and Nursing Homes

2409. DR. ISHWAR CHANDRA GUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Nursing Homes, Public Call Offices and Five Star Hotels charge the same rates for local, interstate and international Calls from their customers as prescribed by the Department of Telecommunications; and

(b) if not, the reasons for variations in their rates'?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) and (b) While Departmental Public Call Offices operating on franchise basis are charging the rates prescribed by the Department of Telecommunications for local, inter-state and international calls from their customers, some of the Nursing Homes and Five Star Hotels are known to be charging higher call charges for these services from their customers on account of the overheads relating to telecom equipment, operating charges and environmental facilities provided by them.

Mass Casual Leave by Videsh Sanchar N'gam Limited Employees

2410. SHRI O. P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the employees of Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited went on mass casual leave on the 24th January in support of their demands, snapping the country's telecommunication links with the rest of the world; and

(b) if so, the details of their demands and the action Government propose to take to avert disruption of the country's telecommunication links?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNI CATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) and (b) No Sir, there was no disruption of country's telecommunication links with the rest of the world on 24.1.1995. However, employees of VSNL had gone on mass casual leave on 24.1.1995 in support of their demand for issue of VSNL shares to them on preferential basis. The Government is taking all necessary steps to settle the issue.

Improvement of Telecommunication Services

2411. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any